



# CLA and Care Leaver Sufficiency Statement 2017 - 2020

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## **1. Introduction**

Rutland's Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Leavers Strategy 2017-2020 (hereafter referred to as 'the Strategy') has been developed by the Council and its partners to set out our ambitions for the children and young people in our care. The strategy is informed by this Sufficiency Statement which sets out the current level of need for, and provision of, placements for CLA in Rutland along with the actions which Rutland is taking to ensure sufficient appropriate support and accommodation for care leavers in the future.

### **1.1 Statutory Duty**

Under 22 (G) of the Children Act 1989 (amended 2008) there is a statutory duty placed on local authorities to ensure there is sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of their CLA. The duty requires local authorities:

**To take steps that secure, as far as reasonably practical, sufficient accommodation for CLA within their local authority area.**

The aim of this duty – known as the sufficiency duty – is to improve outcomes for CLA. Sufficient accommodation must be provided 'where reasonably practical' (lack of resources is not considered a barrier), and having 'regard to the benefit of having a number of providers and a range of accommodation'. The requirements of this duty were amended and updated under the auspices of the Adoption and Childrens Act 2002, and the Children and Families Act 2014.

Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children (2010) further reinforces the responsibilities of the local authority when sourcing a placement for a looked after child, from Section 22C:

- Allowing the child to live near his/her home
- Not disrupting the child's education or training
- Enabling the child and a 'looked after' sibling to live together
- Meeting the particular needs of disabled children; and
- Providing accommodation within the local authority's area, unless that is not reasonably practicable.

The sufficiency duty applies to those children who are 'looked after' under the Children Act 1989 definition:

- Those subject to care orders or interim care orders (under sections 31 and 38 of the 1989 Act);
- Those children who have been placed, or are authorised to be placed, with prospective adopters by a local authority (section 18(3) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002);
- Those who are voluntarily accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Where children are accommodated under this provision, parental responsibility remains with the parents; and
- Those who are subject to court orders with residence requirements (for example secure remand or remand to local authority accommodation) in accordance with section 21 of the Children Act 1989.

## 1.2 Strategic context

This Sufficiency Statement is accompanied by The Rutland's CLA and Care Leavers Strategy 2017-2020. The Strategy is exclusively focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for the CLA and Care Leavers for whom we are Corporate Parent, and is underpinned by our vision:

**To ensure the service and support we deliver to our CLA and Care Leavers, would be good enough for our child, our young person and our family.**

We know that the best outcomes for CLA and Care Leavers can only be achieved through good partnership working across the whole Council, foster carers, commissioners and providers of healthcare, schools and colleges, and all public and voluntary sector organisations in Rutland. Equally, we know that effective partnership working must be informed by a robust evidence base, of which this Sufficiency Statement is a vital component.

The Strategy is built around the six promises which make up '*The Pledge: Our Promise to Children and Young People in our Care and our Care Leavers*', developed by our Children in Care Council:

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### Our pledge is to ensure that all CLA and Care Leavers:

- Are happy and have good health and wellbeing
  - Are safe and in safe and stable placements (including staying put offer)
  - Achieve their full potential and have access to good education, training and/or employment.
  - Are listened to and supported to participate in society
  - Build positive relationships
  - Are prepared for adulthood
- 

For each of the six pledges described above, the Strategy sets out outcome statements and key measures. The Strategy is accompanied by our Pledge Scorecard which is updated quarterly and reviewed at the Corporate Parenting Board, along with feedback from CLA, Care Leavers and professionals.

In Chapter 2 we consider the national and local picture with regards to current need in relation to CLA and Care Leavers. Chapter 3 describes current levels of provision in Rutland, and Chapter 4 summarises the key findings and outlines areas for further consideration.

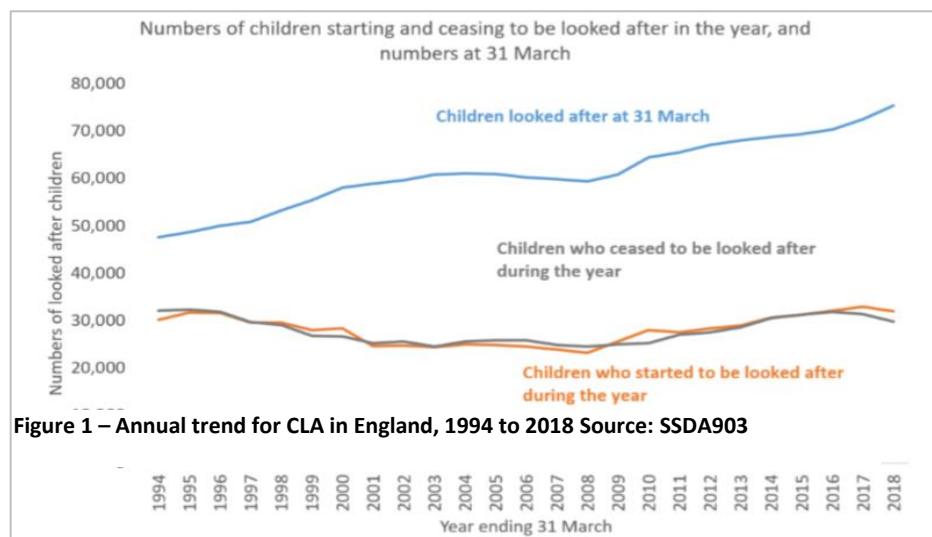
## 2. Current levels of need

In this section we set out current levels of need for CLA and Care Leavers in Rutland. We put this into context by comparing with published regional and national data.

### 2.1 Number and profile of CLA

Figure 1 (right) shows the increasing number of CLA in England from 1994 to 2018. Over the last five years (2013/14 to 2017/18) there has been an increase of around 9.6% in the number of CLA to 75,420 children across all local authorities (LAs).

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 the number of children starting to be looked after has fallen by 3%, after a period of gradual increases. 32,050 children started to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2018, down from 32,940 in 2017.



As shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** the number of CLA in Rutland has decreased to 30 in March 2018. Rutland has the lowest in number of CLA in England (other than City of London and Isles of Scilly).

The number of children who ceased to be looked after per year has been increasing since 2014/15. In 2017/18 there were significantly more children who ceased to be looked after than who started to become looked after.

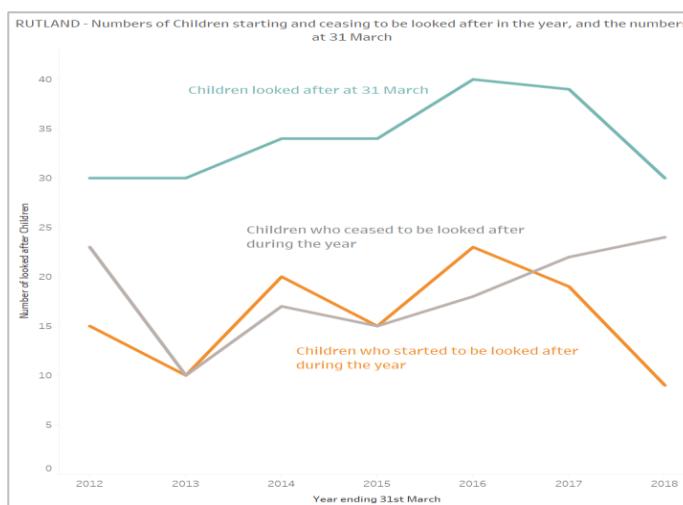


Figure 2 – Annual Trend for CLA in Rutland 2011/12 to 2017/18  
Source SSDA903

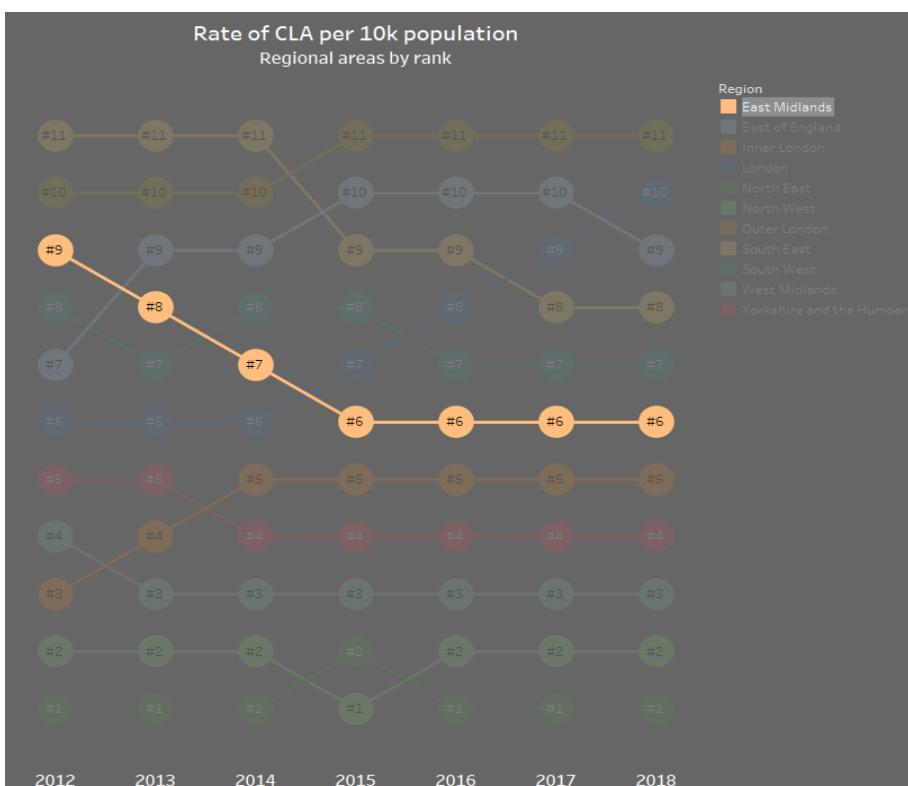
(1) Number of CLA at 31 <sup>st</sup> March							
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rutland	30	30	34	34	40	39	30
East Midland	4,740	4,880	4,950	5,100	5,170	5,360	5,630
England	67,070	68,070	68,810	69,470	70,400	72,590	75,420
(2) Rate of CLA per 10,000 children aged under 18 years, at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018							
Rutland	36	40	44	44	52	50	39
East Midlands	50	51	51	53	53	55	57
England	59	60	60	60	60	62	64
(3) CLA at any time during the year ending 31 March 2018							
Rutland	47	39	51	49	57	60	48

Table 1 – Source SSDA903

At the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 the *proportion* of children who are looked after in England has increased to 64 per 10,000 which is up from 62 per 10,000 in 2017 and 60 per 10,000 in 2016. The rate of CLA is increasing slightly ahead of the raising estimated population rate.

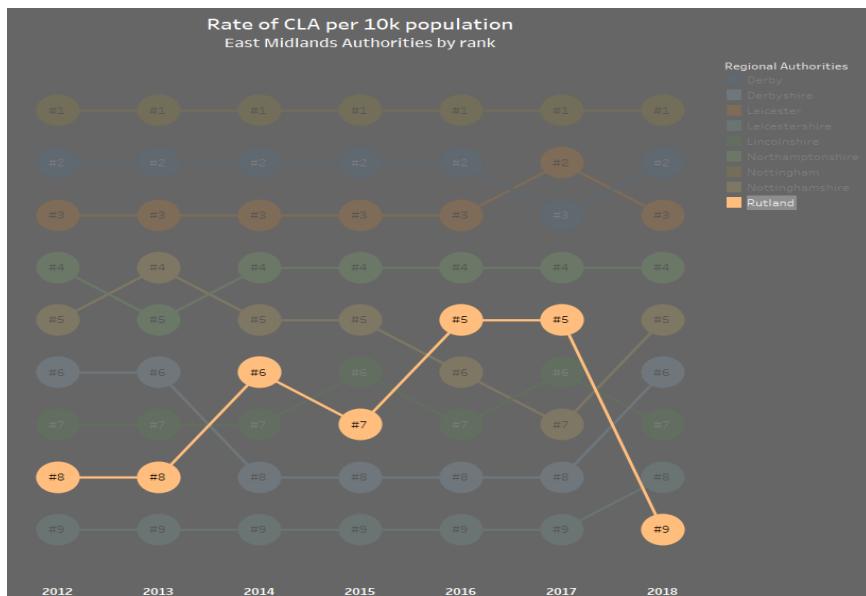
The East Midland region generally has a CLA rate lower than the national average. The proportion of CLA is increasing at a similar rate to the national average (2 per 10,000 per year). The East midlands has had the 6<sup>th</sup> highest rate of CLA per population since 2014/15.

Figure 3 Rates of CLA by Rank – Regions Source: SSDA 903



In 2017/18 the rate of CLA per 10,000 population in Rutland is 39. When compared to all authorities in England the rate is in lower quartile (rank 15). This is lower than previous years where Rutland was in the lower middle quartile.

Rutland has historically had a low rate of CLA compared to most other authorities in the East Midlands. The highest were in 2015/16 and 2016/17 where Rutland had the 5<sup>th</sup> highest rate in the region. In 2017/18 the rate of CLA has decreased and Rutland currently has the lowest rate in the region. This is partly due to the strengthening of the reunification process and the continual assessment of parents and carers to ensure that placement remain in children and young people's interest and wellbeing.



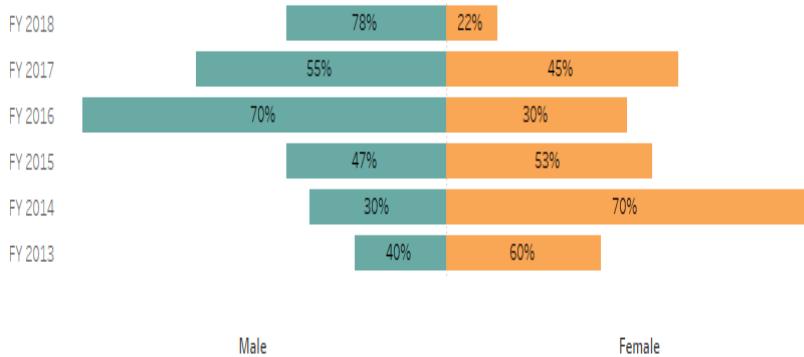
**Figure 4 rates of CLA by Rank – East midlands Source: SSDA 903**

The relatively small numbers of CLA in Rutland are important to bear in mind when considering the information which follows in this Sufficiency Statement. The impact of sibling groups and even of individual children on the profile of CLA in Rutland is much more pronounced than in other local authorities. For example, one large sibling group of children can completely change the profile of ethnicity or placements. Similarly, changes to one or two people in the workforce will also have a greater relative impact on service delivery than might be expected in other local authorities (e.g. on worker caseload). The challenges of service delivery are not smaller because there are relatively low absolute numbers of CLA, but they may be different to those experienced elsewhere and require a different response. Furthermore, the rate per 10,000 children is broadly in line with other local authorities in the region which means that, whilst the absolute number of CLA is low, relative to the local population and the resources available, it is comparable to other local authorities in the region.

### **Characteristics of CLA in Rutland:**

#### **Gender**

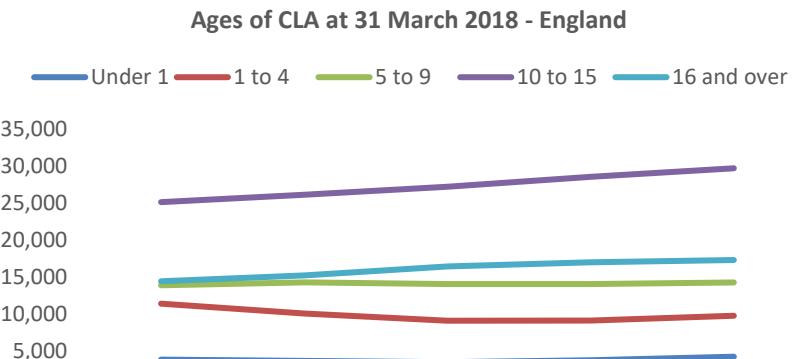
Figure 5 shows the gender profile of new placements in Rutland over the last six years. During 2017/18, the gender split for CLA was 78% male and 22% female. Nationally, the gender split is 56% male and 44% female (as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018) and these proportions have varied little over recent years. By including the gender split for previous years, it is possible to see how much the gender split can change year-on-year due to the relatively small numbers of CLA in Rutland. There is a tendency towards a higher proportion of males. As a whole this chart represents 97 children. 51 (53%) where male and 46 (47%) where female.



**Figure 5 – Gender profile of new placements in Rutland, 2012/13 – 2017/18**

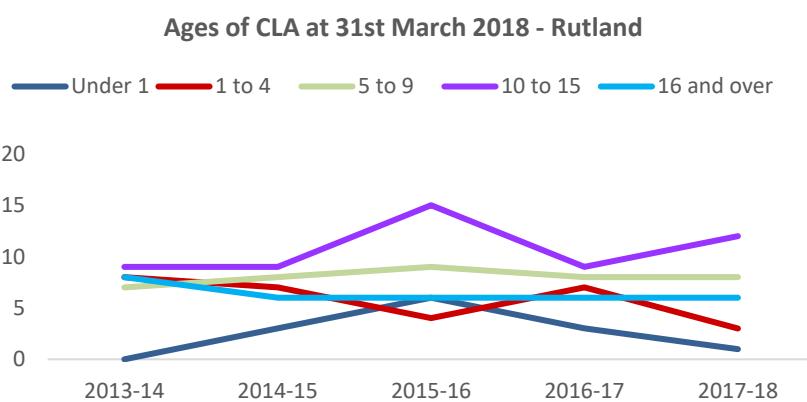
### Age

In England 2017/18, the largest age group (39%) of looked after children are aged 10-15 years; 23% are aged 16 years and over, 19% are aged 5-9 years, 13% are aged 1-4 years and 6% are aged under 1 year.



**Figure 6 – Age groups of CLA in England, 2013 to 2018 Source: SSDA 903**

The age profile for CLA in England has changed over the last four years, with a steady increase in the number and proportion of older children (aged 10 to 15 years – see [Error! Reference source not found.6](#)). Around 62% of CLA were aged 10 years and over in 2018, compared with 56% in 2013. There has been a reduction in the number and proportion of children aged 1-4 years (from 18% of the Looked After population in 2013 to 13% in 2018).



**Figure 7 – Age groups of CLA in Rutland, 2013 to 2018 Source: SSDA 903**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>No of Children</b>	<b>%</b>
Under 1	0	0
1 to 4	2	8%
5 to 9	6	23%
10 to 15	13	50%
16 and over	5	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2 – Age profile of CLA in Rutland, December 2018**

In Rutland, 69% of CLA are over 10 years old , 23% are aged 5 to 9 years (36%) and 8% are under 4 years (see Table 22). The age profile changes a lot from year-on-year in Rutland.

### **Ethnicity**

As shown in

Table 2, below, Rutland CLA are predominately White British (80.8%) with the next largest group African (7.7%). Whilst there are slight variations in the categories used within Rutland's social care case management system and those collected for the Census, it is possible to compare the profile of CLA with the general population of children in Rutland.

Table 2 shows that there is a higher proportion of children from Black and Minority Ethnic groups that are looked after than there is in the general population. Comparing Rutland with the ethnic breakdown for CLA in England as a whole, the figure for White British is broadly similar, there is a slightly higher proportion of African CLA in Rutland, and slight lower proportion of Asian and Mixed background CLA in Rutland.

<b>Ethnicity of Children in Rutland</b>	<b>Rutland – general population aged 0-17yrs</b>	<b>Rutland CLA</b>	<b>England CLA<sup>5</sup></b>
		<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
White British	93.2%	80.8%	77%
African <sup>1</sup>	0.6%	7.7%	4%
Any other White background <sup>2</sup>	2.3%	3.8%	
Any Other Asian Background <sup>3</sup>	1.4%	-	4%
Any other Mixed background <sup>4</sup>	2.4%	3.8%	10%
White and Black Caribbean <sup>1</sup>	n/a <sup>1</sup>	3.8%	-
Other ethnic groups	-	-	3%
Not Known	-	-	1%

**Table 2 – Ethnicity of Rutland CLA compared to general population of children (0-17yrs) in Rutland (Census 2011)**

<sup>1</sup> = Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; <sup>2</sup> = Other White/Irish/Gypsy or Irish Traveller; <sup>3</sup> = Asian/Asian British; <sup>4</sup> = Mixed/multiple ethnic group; <sup>5</sup> = Source: SFR41, Table LAA8: CLA at 31 March 2018 by ethnic origin, by Local Authority

### **Children with Disabilities**

As of December 2018 one Child Looked After is registered as disabled in Rutland.

## **2.2 Sibling groups of CLA**

Due to the relatively small number of CLA in Rutland it is important to consider the number of families or sibling groups for CLA. There were 26 CLA during December 2018, of which there; are 7 single children, 3 two-sibling groups, 4 three-sibling groups and 4 sibling group of four or more children. 73% of all CLA in Rutland are part of a sibling group.

National comparative data for sibling groups is not included in Government statistics on CLA (Department for Education). However, research published by The Family Rights Group in January 2015, based on a Freedom of Information request of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014, estimated that there were on average around 453 to 479 CLA per local authority, of whom around 222 were part of a sibling group. This gives an approximate average figure of between 46% and 49% of CLA per local authority who are part of a sibling group.<sup>1</sup> The proportion of CLA who are part of a sibling group in Rutland is higher than in other local authorities. However, due to the relatively small number of CLA, the impact of a large sibling group – for example, 4 or more children – will have a disproportionately bigger impact on Rutland than on most other local authorities. This will impact particularly on placements as it is considered in the interests of siblings to be placed together, unless it is contrary to an individual child's welfare needs.

## **2.3 Category of need and legal status**

Abuse or neglect has consistently remained the highest category of need for CLA in Rutland over the past five years. At December 2018 it is currently the primary category of need in 88% of all cases, followed by family dysfunction, and absent parenting.

At December 2018 23 CLA are subject to a Care order (88%). 2 children are subject to voluntary accommodation under section 20 and 1 child is subject to an Interim care order.

## **2.4 Length of placement**

December 2018, three children (12%) have been looked after for less than 12 months.

Four children (15%) have been looked after longer than 1 year but less than 2 years.

19 children (73%) have been looked after for over 2 years.

Of the children that have been looked after for over 2 and a half years 84% have been in the same placement for at least 2 years. The national average is 70%. This suggests that Rutland has a high level of stability in long term or permanent placements.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on this research, including the calculation of sibling groups, please see:  
Ashley, C. and Roth, D. (2014) 'What happens to siblings in the care system?' *Family Rights Group and Kinship Care Alliance*. <https://www.frg.org.uk/images/PDFS/siblings-in-care-final-report-january-2015.pdf> (last accessed August 2017).

## 2.5 Profile of placement type

Nationally, the majority of placements for CLA are with foster carers (73%). This has remained fairly static over the last five years. In Rutland 80% of CLA were in foster placements (SSDA903 2017/18). At December 2018 77% of CLA were in a foster placement, 15% in residential setting and 8% placed with own parents.

Placement Type	Number of Children	%
Foster placement with friend or family long term	6	23%
Foster placement with LA carer short term	6	23%
Foster placement with IFA carer short term	4	15%
Foster placement with friend or family short term	3	12%
Residential Care	3	12%
Placed with own parents	2	%8
Foster placement with LA carer long term	1	4%
Residential school	1	4%

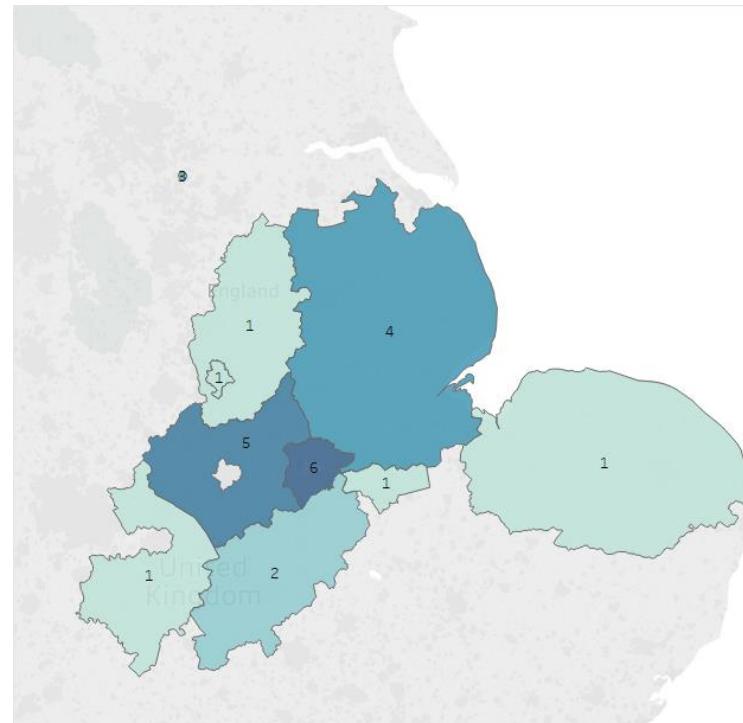
**Table 3 – Placement type for CLA in Rutland, December 2018**

## 2.6 Geographic distribution of placements

Nationally, the percentage of CLA placed within 20 miles from the child's home is 74%. For Rutland this was 40% (SSRS903 2017/18). The average for Rutland's statistical neighbours is 59%. This means that generally rural or small authorities are less likely to be able to accommodate a child within 20 miles of home.

Of the 19 new placements during 2017/18, the majority (53%) where placed less than 20 miles outside the local authority (National average 21%). A contributing factor for this is that Rutland has several in-house foster carers who live outside the boundaries of Rutland. Although they are very close and often within 20 miles of the child's home they are considered outside boundary placements.

At December 2018 58% (7 children) of placements which were over 20 miles from home were 'connected person' placements. The placement of children and young people with families is a primary focus for Rutland however this can present its own unique challenges. The accessing of services out of county and the available training and support for carers are particular challenges. To remedy these challenges we gave forged positive relationships with the Local Authorities in their area to ensure that training can be accessed local to the family if it is available. Our health colleagues work closely with out of county providers to ensure that the health and wellbeing needs are met when the placement is made and our Virtual head ensures our children and young people are receiving aspirational and appropriate educational provision



**Figure 8 – Map of CLA placements for Rutland, as at Dec 2018**

## 2.7 Spending on CLA<sup>2</sup>

It is useful to look at spending within the national context, which we can do for the five-year period 2013 to 2018.

Note – all figures quoted in this section are based on local authorities' financial submission (section 251 return) to the DFE. This submission includes, within its category of 'CLA', spend relating to groups of children including those under special guardianship order (SGO).

Children included in this definition of 'CLA' differ from the children included in the SSDA903 CLA return, where, for example, children under SGO are *not* included.

It is necessary to use the section 251 return to compare on a like-for-like financial basis with other authorities.

It is not possible to compare on a cost-per-child basis, as all authorities' spend figures relate to the number of children looked after *at any point* during the year. This does not reveal for how long each child was looked after, making any calculation of 'average' cost unreliable.

It is also important to note that *actual* spend figures are used, and have not been adjusted for inflation. Inflation from the start to end of the five-year period was 2.8% (*source: Bank of England inflation calculator*).

The total spending (gross expenditure) on CLA in England increased by 22.3% over the 5 years, reaching £4.5bn in 2017-18. Regionally the increase was more pronounced over the same time period – East Midlands spending was up by 28.8% – whilst in Rutland, spend on CLA increased by 43.5% to £1.8m in 2017-18.

Figure 8 (below) shows the total spend on all Children's Services and spend on CLA in Rutland over the last five years. Whilst spend in the last two years has been relatively consistent, the overall five-year trend is one of increasing costs – 43.5% increase for CLA spend and 19.9% increase for overall Children's Services spend.

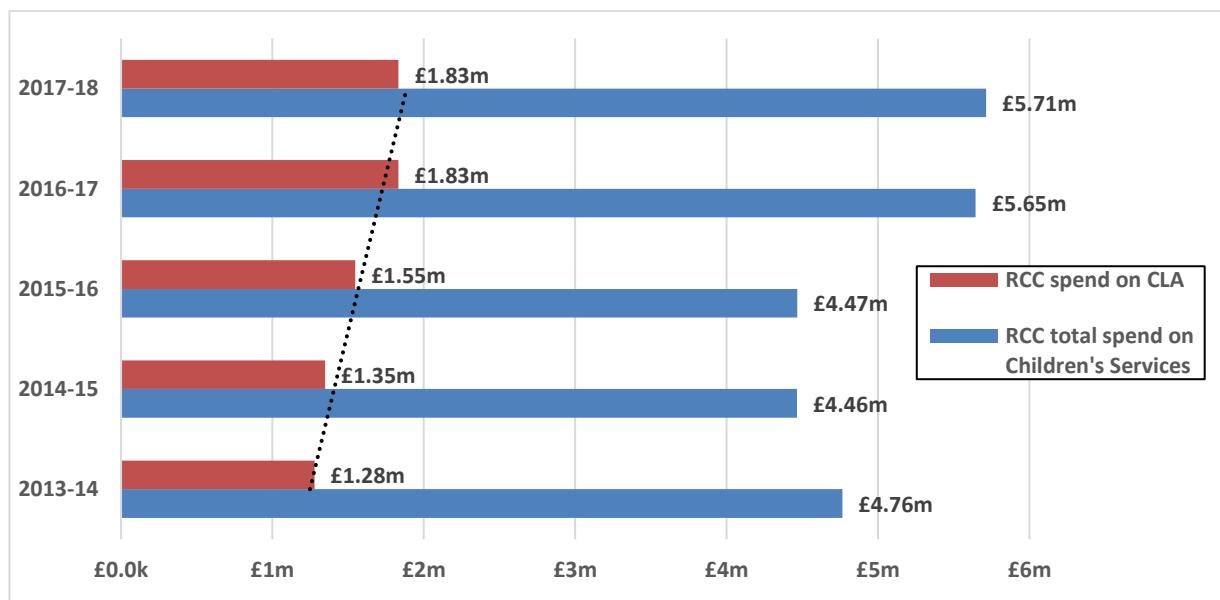
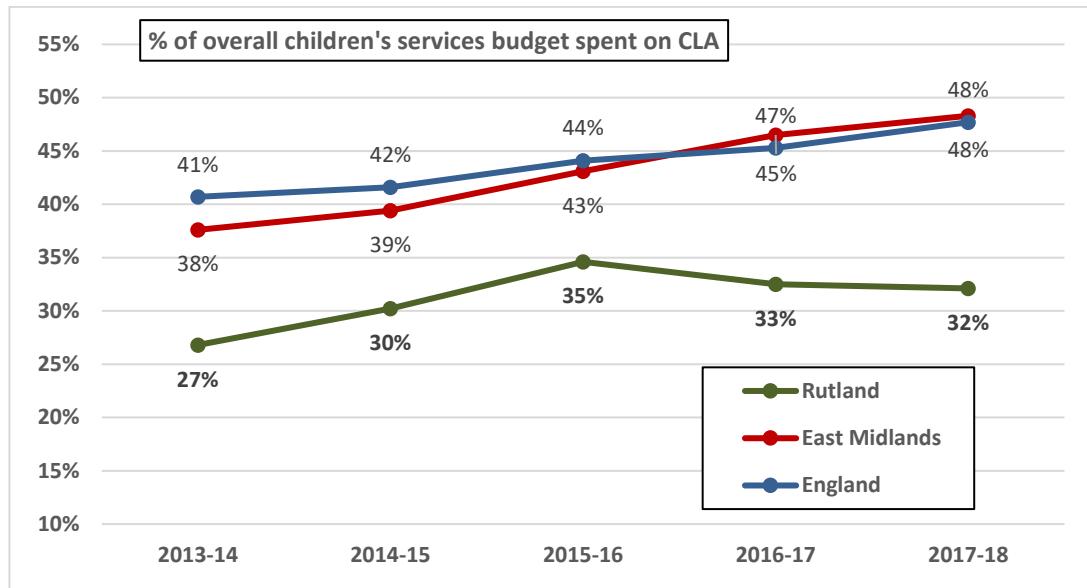


Figure 8 – Spend on all children's services and CLA in Rutland, 2013-14 to 2017-18.  
[SFR63, Table 6, Source Section 251 Outturn survey (DfE).]

<sup>2</sup> LA and school expenditure is sourced from the Department for Education, Statistical First Release (SFR63), Source: Section 251 Outturn Survey. Available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-local-authority-school-finance-data>

As shown in Figure 9 (below), there has been an increase in the proportion of money spent on CLA compared to overall children's services spend. Nationally, the proportional spend on CLA has risen from 41% to 48% over the five-year comparative period, with a broadly similar trend regionally, up from 38% to 48% for the East Midlands. In Rutland the increase is smaller – up by 5% – and from a lower starting point; from 27% to 32%.

Overall, this means that Rutland spends a very low proportion of all its children's services spending on CLA (32%) compared to England and the East Midlands (both 48%). Only two local authorities in England spend a lower<sup>3</sup> proportion than Rutland – Lincolnshire (31%) and Hackney (30%).



**Figure 9 – Trend for the proportion of children's services spend which is spent on CLA.**  
[Source: SFR63, Table 6, Source Section 251 Outturn survey.]

## 2.8 Care Leavers

The Term 'Care Leavers' is used to describe those children and young people who fall within the scope of local authority duties set out in section 23A and 24D of the Children Act 1989. Rutland currently has 28 Care Leavers as at the end of December 2018. This number has increased more than the number of CLA leaving care. This is due to the Children and Social Work and act 2017, which requires local authorities to now provide leaving care services to all former looked after young people up to the age of 25. The leaving care service has been reaching out to former looked after people age 21-24 to enquire if they wish to receive support.

Figure 1 shows that there are more female Care Leavers (54%) than male (46%). Most Care Leavers are White British (61%) 25% are African, are Other Ethnic Group (11%) and Asian/Asian British (4%). Three of the young people in this cohort of Care Leavers have a disability (11%).

Of the Care Leavers aged between 19 and 21 years, 59% are in Education, Training or Employment, which is above the national comparator for England (51%) and for Rutland's nearest statistical neighbours (53%). No Care Leavers were living in a House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) and all apart from one Care Leavers aged 19 to 21 were in suitable accommodation (95%).

<sup>3</sup> Lowest figure excludes Isles of Scilly and City of London due to exceptionally low numbers of CLA.

Category of Care Leaver	Number of CYP
<b>Eligible</b> - a young person aged 16 and 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who is still being looked after	5
<b>Relevant</b> - a young person aged 16 and 17 who had been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who has left care	2
<b>Former Relevant</b> – a young person between the ages of 18-21 (or 24 if in education or training) who was previously 'eligible' or 'relevant'	26
<b>Qualifying</b> - a young person under 21 (or 24 if in education or training) who stops being looked after, accommodated or privately fostered after the age of 16	0

Table 5 Category of Care leavers, December 2018

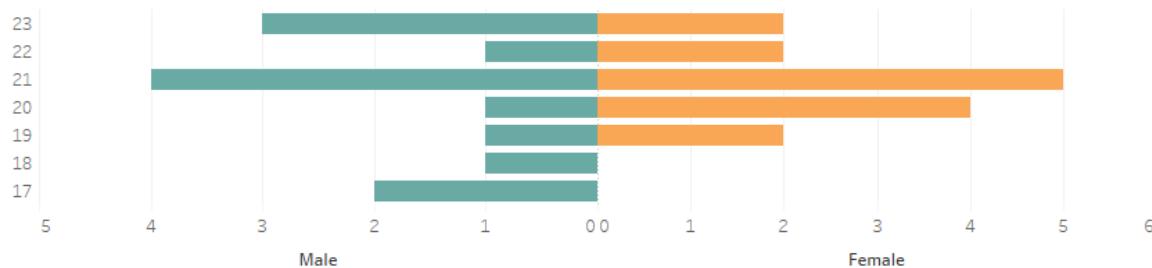


Figure 10 – Age and gender profile of Care Leavers in Rutland, December 2018

### 3. Current provision

#### 3.1 Fostering sufficiency strategy

The Local Authority has a duty to ensure there is sufficient accommodation within their area for children in their care. The duty has been clarified and reinforced by the issue of statutory guidance on Sufficiency in 2010.

Rutland County Council's response to the statutory guidance is set out below, alongside the plan to ensure sufficient accommodation of all types for children in the care of the Council. The statutory guidance applies not only to the Council, but also to local statutory partners in so far as they have responsibilities for the provision of accommodation. Schools, health, housing and the private and voluntary sectors all contribute to the accommodation and overall wellbeing of CLA and Care Leavers.

In developing this review of the current arrangements and ongoing plan for sufficiency, we are mindful of the regulatory and legislative developments that have been, or are due to be, implemented. These include:

- Care Planning, Placement and Review Regulations 2011
- Fostering Regulations 2011 and Minimum Standards 2011
- Adoption Regulations 2014 and Minimum Standards 2011
- Children's Homes Regulations 2001, amended 2013
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Staying Put guidance, Planning Transitions to Adulthood for Care Leavers, 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

New responsibilities and requirements taken into account in this review of Rutland placement sufficiency include the impact of improved timescales for court and adoption processes (under the Service Level Agreement with Lincolnshire County Council), the reform of arrangements to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs

and Disabilities (SEND), and provision for Care Leavers to remain in their foster placements after their 18th birthdays (Staying Put and the possible development of supported lodgings or supported accommodation projects).

The challenge for the fostering service will be to increase capacity for teenage placements; parent and baby placements; the number of households which reflect a background of dual heritage; multiple sibling groups; and further development of the Staying Put scheme. The fostering team will support the development of a more diverse selection of foster carers via the recruitment process.

### **3.2 Foster carer allowances and fees**

Rutland foster carers receive a fostering allowance for each child in placement. This is paid to the foster carers to cover all costs in relation to looking after children and young people and is currently based on the National Fostering Network recommended rates:

Age Group	Weekly Basic Allowance	Festivity Allowance	Birthday Allowance
0-4 years	£145	£145	£145
5-10 years	£165	£165	£165
11-15 years	£206	£206	£206
16+ years	£249	£249	£249

Table 6 – Summary of foster carer allowances in Rutland

Each child is allowed a ‘Birthday Allowance’ (equal to one week of the age appropriate Fostering Allowance), a ‘Christmas/Religious Festival Allowance’ (equal to one week of the age appropriate fostering allowance) and a ‘Holiday Allowance’ (equal to two weeks of the age appropriate Fostering Allowance).

Fee payments are currently paid to carers in recognition of their skills, experience and qualifications in caring for children and young people based on an assessment by the fostering team. Foster carers will receive a weekly fee based on their fostering level when a child is in placement. Foster carers will receive the additional child fee for each subsequent child in placement.

Fostering Level	Requirements	Weekly Fee	Weekly Fee 2 <sup>nd</sup> child	Weekly Fee 3 <sup>rd</sup> child	Weekly Fee 4 <sup>th</sup> Child and subsequent children
Level 1	Family and friends looking after a child and have had a viability assessment but are not approved connected foster carers	£0 (but child allowance is payable)			
Level 2	All newly approved carers when a child is in placement	£124.74	£93.56 75% of wkly fee	£83.58 67% of wkly fee	£62.37 50% of wkly fee
Level 3	All carers with one year experience, a minimum of 20 overnight stays and completion of the TSD standards	£172.80	£129.60 75% of wkly fee	£115.78 67% of wkly fee	£86.40 50% of wkly fee

Level 4	All carers with at least two year experience and on completion of the TDS (experienced level) and a minimum of 20 overnight stays (in the preceding year)	£218.81	£164.11 75% of wkly fee	£146.60 67% of wkly fee	£109.41 50% of wkly fee
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Table 7 – Summary of fee payments at each level of fostering skills, experience and qualifications

The Council is aware of the importance of the internet to a child/ young person's education and home life. To encourage internet access in fostering households, the fostering service will pay a monthly £15.00 contribution towards broadband payments. Fourteen Foster Carers are currently paid this monthly allowance.

### 3.3 In-house Foster Care

Rutland had 17 fostering households with the approval at Fostering Panel for 28 children and young people of varying ages and genders. However this number is subject to the circumstances of the individual carer and the sibling group Rutland is seeking to place. The numbers of children and young people placed with Rutland foster carers depends on the gender of children and how many bedrooms the carer has available. Foster carers can be approved for one to two children. Usually, if there are two siblings of the same sex, they can be accommodated by these carers, however if they are not siblings, then these placements would not be appropriate. There are currently 17 children placed; 8 with Rutland foster carers and 9 with Connected Person households.

There are 4 a number of children placed in Independent Fostering Agency placements and 5 in residential placements. These are long term placements where following reviews the children are settled and secure and a move would not be in their best interest.

Rutland currently support 17 Special Guardianship households caring for 21 children: 11 of the households caring for 15 children are due to close to Social Care as the Order has been in place for over 3 years and 6 households caring for 10 children will remain open to receive support as the Order was made within the past 3 years or there are complex needs within the family.

Of the in-house foster carers:

- The majority are aged in their 50s and 1 couple are over 60. There are 2 single female carers.
- All of the carers are White British, apart from one. The general population of Rutland is predominantly 'White British' and recruiting from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds is challenging. All foster carers are trained in anti- discriminatory practice. We place asylum seeking children in culturally appropriate placements, whilst continuing to support them.
- All carers are registered to take children from 0 to 18 years old, and 7 have undertaken training to provide supervised contact.
- Currently 15 carers have the capacity to take sibling groups of at least 2 children. However, as previously stated, this is now under review.

### 3.4 Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs)

Rutland works with eight other local authorities in the East Midlands as part of the East Midlands Regional Children's Framework Agreement (EMRCF), which covers independent fostering and residential care. The EMRCF provides a formalised agreement between providers and the nine local authorities to support identification of appropriate placements improve the quality and ensure best value for money. This regional work also supports the provider/commissioner relationships and market development, along with an overview of sufficiency

regionally. The EMRCF was re-tendered at the start of 2016, alongside a refreshed business model requiring providers to identify where their bed spaces are and what specialist areas they offer.

When placements are needed, and there are no Rutland Carers available, then the commissioners use the Framework to secure a placement. The placements made via the EMRCF are those where Rutland is not able to use its own internal provision. There are 34 fostering providers on the current EMRCF, and most of the children placed with IFA carers were placed through this framework. However, there is a general shortage of suitable placements within the region and Rutland, along with other East Midland councils, are finding the need to seek national IFA placements at times of increased need.

### **3.5 Residential Placements**

There is no residential provision within Rutland and this is commissioned on an individual basis as needed via the EMRCF. There are 39 residential providers available through the Framework and, where possible, residential placements are made on it. There have only been three off-Framework placements during the past year: one of which was due to the complex needs and disabilities of the child; and two where residential placements that could also provide education were considered to be the most appropriate resource due to the emotional needs and behaviour of these children.

### **3.6 Local Support Services**

There is a range of provision available to offer wrap-around support. This includes:

- Rutland County Council's Early Help Service, Virtual Head (providing support to schools), dedicated Children with Disabilities Worker, and the Intensive Family Support Service;
- Dedicated Children in Care workers who support children to have contact with their family, life story work and placement support where needed
- A specific CLA health service, provided across Leicestershire and Rutland jointly by the local NHS Partnership Trust (LPT) with clear links to both health visitor and school nursing provision;
- The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

The Council now have a formal arrangement with CAMHS to attend Rutland three to four times per year (dependent on need) to provide support and training for foster carers to better support where they have a child with emotional and/or mental health needs.

### **3.7 Care Leaver Offer**

Rutland Local Offer for Care Leavers is a combination of statutory entitlements and what the Council and their partners offer to provide over and above their local duty. This includes:

- Personal Advisors
- Needs-led assessment
- Health assessment
- Accommodation (providing appropriate housing)
- Advocacy Support (provided by Rutland Youth Service)
- Mentoring Service (provided by Rutland Youth Service)
- Education and Careers Support
- Sexual Health Service
- SUSO ( Speak Up, Speak Out) – Rutland's Children in Care Council
- Corporate Parenting Board.

Rutland's permanence planning process has positively impacted on children and young people by creating more robust permanence planning; this is likely to support Care Leavers in having a more secure placement and their foster carers supporting them in Further Education.

Rutland currently has four Care Leavers at university and are living-- either independently or in halls of residence at the provision. In future those who wish to stay with their foster carers would likely require support through the Staying Put arrangement to provide support to them during university holidays. It is recognised that increased encouragement to attend college and university would make a difference for those who are in foster care at present and they would benefit from staying with carers longer term. The last young Care Leavers who attended university all graduated. One young man is studying for his Master's Degree with the support of the service.

Rutland underwent Ofsted's Single Inspection Framework in November 2016 (published in February 2017). The following key findings were highlighted by Ofsted in relation to Care Leavers:

- Ofsted judge that the experience of Care Leavers in Rutland is 'good'.
- Local authority staff make strenuous efforts to maintain frequent contact with all of its Care Leavers, and have remained in touch with all of them for the past two years.
- Care Leavers are safe and none are judged to be at risk of harm.
- All current Care Leavers reside in suitable and safe accommodation, either with former foster carers or independently.
- The local authority prioritises the accommodation needs of Care Leavers.
- Care Leavers successfully make the transition to independent living, and there have been one tenancy breakdown for Carer Leavers in the last two years. The young woman was NEET and is now in full time employment, looking to renew her independent living arrangements.

### **3.8 Staying Put**

From the age of 18, young people are no longer legally looked after. If they remain with their former foster carers after their 18th birthday, the arrangement is classed as 'Staying Put'. As they are over 18 years, the local authority is no longer making a placement but facilitating a 'Staying Put' arrangement for the young person. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) defines 'Staying Put' as those young people who were looked after immediately prior to their 18th birthday by foster carers and whose continuing care is identified in their pathway plan.

The Local Authority has a responsibility to ensure the safeguarding arrangements are appropriate to meet the young person's needs and the 'Staying Put' carer is satisfactory. The young person continues to be supported by their Personal Advisor up to the age of 25 years. They will continue to work with the young person to produce a reviewed Pathway Plan on a six-month basis and this will also look at the accommodation arrangements. The Staying Put arrangements mean a reduction in the fees paid to the carers who are supporting the Care Leavers and this needs to be considered when the foster carers chose to look after the young person post 18 years of age. This will impact on the number of placements available to Rutland.

Young people who are in Staying Put arrangements continue to have an adult's support for their transition into adulthood. This reflects the support offered to young people who are not in the looked after population and gives the young people time to mature and develop the skills they need to be successful adults. The Staying Put offer is particularly important for those young people who have additional needs or require additional support as they become independent.

It is the aim of Rutland County Council to recruit sufficient foster carers over the next 3 years so we can expand the Staying Put service to ensure we are able to meet the needs of the young people in Rutland. This is a cost effective method of supporting young people who are Care Leavers and provide them with the stability and family environment they need at the most vulnerable time for a young adult.

Where foster children are Staying Put in placement, the foster carers need to return to the Fostering Panel due to the change in circumstances as the child/young person will become an adult member of the fostering household. It should also be noted that young people remaining in a foster care household at the age of eighteen, will become adult members of the household and will require a valid DBS check.

The Staying Put scheme needs monitoring and will need to be expanded to enable further children to remain in their foster placement post 18 years following the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The remuneration given to Staying Put carers is less and can influence their decision regarding continuing to care for the young people. If this isn't an option, the Housing Department can often provide suitable accommodation and the young people will be supported by their Personal Advisor from Leaving Care.

If a young person is living in another area, they will need to respect the local housing policies regarding their "local connection" as some have changed recently to the detriment of the care leavers who have made relationships and networks in the area. If the local council do not have a duty to house them: they will need to return to Rutland or move to private tenancy accommodation. Having young people in these arrangements is cost effective for the local authority as the financial commitment to maintain these arrangements are greatly reduced compared to paying for alternative accommodation, and often Bed and Breakfast accommodation in emergency situations.

### **3.9 Supported accommodation**

For some young people aged 16 and above foster care is not the right environment however they still need support as they transition into adulthood. Supported accommodation can provide this as young people are placed with adults who want to provide support at various levels, from teaching them how to cook, to supporting them to find work. Supported accommodation can, and should, offer differing levels of support to young people depending on their needs and wants. As supported lodgings are for young adults aged 16 and above they do not require the same level of assessment and regulation as foster placements, however foster carers are able to provide supported lodgings to young people under a different agreement when it is the correct care plan for a young person.

Supported accommodation is currently provided in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire for Rutland young people, there is no provision in the local area for those young people who no longer wish to be in foster care post 16 years. There is a need to consider local, Rutland based supported accommodation to enable young people to remain in their local communities and near birth families, foster carers and friends.

### **3.10 Adoption**

Rutland County Council commission their adoption service from Leicestershire County Council under a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The SLA has been reviewed and agreed from April 2017- April 2019. During the reporting period, 8 Rutland children were matched with adopters by this agency. Children who have a permanence plan of adoption are referred to the Family Finding Team, they then list the child (or children) on Link-maker: an electronic tool that joins up children's social care across the UK to increase placement choice for children and to improve use of data

and collaboration between local authorities and providers to source adoptive parents.

When an adoptive family is found, a matching process is completed prior to the child having introductions to the potential adoptive carers. The adoptive carers are taken to the Adoption Panel in Leicestershire to be approved as adopters and matched with the child. Rutland's Agency Decision Maker is then responsible for reading the minutes of the Adoption Panel and then agreeing to a match between the child and the adoptive parents. Following planned introductions, the child will be placed in the adoptive home. They remain a Child Looked After and subject to the CLA reviews by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The child's social worker will visit weekly for the first 4 weeks to ensure that the child is settled with their adoptive family. They then assess their visiting pattern dependent on the child's needs. When the child has been in placement for 10 weeks, the adoptive parent can make an application to adopt. Following a court hearing, an adoption order is granted and the child is no longer looked after. A celebration hearing takes place in court to finalise the adoption.

Two Rutland children have been adopted this year, one child is in their adoptive placement with their former foster carers and there is also one child who has had adoptive parents identified with the Adoption Panel in mid-October 2017. These foster carers can apply for an adoption order directly to the court as the child has been placed with them for over 2 years. There is also a child who is being considered for adoption by her current independent foster carers.

Pre- and post- adoption support is provided in a number of ways within Leicestershire for a number of reasons, for example: to help adopters parent in a way that takes into consideration the trauma their child (ren) have suffered; or the impact that care has had on their child's health and development. The adoption social worker provides support up to three years post adoption order. After this three-year period, locality-led support is available to families at risk of adoption breakdown – this includes active intervention, signposting to support networks and providers, or respite and accommodation of the child (ren) in the most extreme cases.

Some adopted children and their families require specialist counselling and therapy to help them make sense of their experiences and losses. In such cases an assessment will be conducted and an application may be made for appropriate therapeutic services through the Adoption Support Fund.

Birth Parents are offered support prior to the adoption of their children to help them understand why adoption has been chosen as the appropriate plan for their child and to help them contribute to that care planning. This support is offered through a leaflet provided at the point of the Agency Decision Maker ratifying a care plan of adoption. Such requests are presented to Placement and Additional Resource Panel where an application for an independent support person will be presented. Similarly, if a birth parent or birth family requires counselling to help them deal with the loss of their child, an assessment is completed and presented to the Placement and Additional Resource Panel for support.

The adoption team in Leicestershire and the Team Manager for Fostering, Adoption and Care Leavers Service in Rutland meet bi-monthly to ensure that appropriate processes are in place and to discuss any further children who have a plan of adoption in Rutland.

In April 2019 adoption services were transferred to Lincolnshire County Council.

### **3.11 Diversity - Increasing sufficiency through recruitment**

There is limited diversity within current foster placements in Rutland which will be addressed in the forward planning of recruitment campaigns. As part of the current recruitment drive, Rutland will look to identify diverse foster carers suitable for parent and baby/child placements, supportive living, sibling groups and foster placements for our UASC young people. At present there are limited diverse placements and few who are willing to take teenagers and children with complex needs. We have successfully placed an asylum seeking young woman with foster carers and they have found the process interesting and informative as well as offering a placement. These foster carers would recommend any others to look at offering this placement.

The planned recruitment process for 2019 will provide more emphasis on care of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). UASC can arrive in the area spontaneously when they are found in the county by police; Rutland is also a member of the National Transfer Scheme supporting authorities who receive high numbers of UASC. Each authority is required to place no more than 0.07% of the population's children - currently 5 placements for Rutland.

Since March 2018, there have been 6 enquiries in relation to foster carer recruitment and 5 of these were invited to attend a Skills to Fostering Course running on 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> April 2019. There was only one who did not meet the criteria to go on to Skills to Foster. It is envisaged that the Skills to Foster courses will run quarterly, with the next planned course starting in July 2019. Recruitment events and promotions for the next 12 months will target the harder to place children and young people's placements, parent and child and diverse households. The Skills to Fostering course is being facilitated by "Breaking the Cycle", an experienced training provider in courses for fostering ensuring that running quarterly courses is sustainable and that the quality of training is high. In addition to this, we are working with the Fostering Team to create capacity to ensure all newly recruited foster carers are assessed in the most robust and positive manner, fully supported as they develop and that these assessments are completed in timescale.

Foster carers who successfully complete the Skills to Foster 3 day course will go on to have Stage 1 checks and a Form F assessment. The Form F Assessment is completed under the Fostering Regulations and this assessment will take 6-8 months before being presented to the Fostering Panel. During their assessments, the potential Foster Carers are invited to the training and support groups for approved carers. This has been particularly useful for potential carers as they have made links with other carers, workers and have additional training.

Should there be more foster carers approved than needed by the local authority, there is a Service Level Agreement in place to enable our neighbouring authorities to use these placements. Our neighbouring authorities are currently using 2 placements within the Rutland Foster Carers. This partnership has to date been positive.

### **3.12 Respite Placements**

Rutland only has a few current foster carers who have the capacity to offer respite placements for children and young people. However this capacity needs to be increased to offer respite for children and young people who have disabilities. It is noted that the Council has seen an increase in need for respite care for children with disabilities. The current carers do offer some respite, however carers for this particular need will need to be recruited to fulfil this deficit in the fostering provision. Respite foster carers for children with extremely challenging

behaviours also need to be recruited, and our main stream foster carers upskilled to meet their needs if they have a vacancy.

These kinds of placements could support the children to remain at home, or offer foster carers the opportunity to recharge their batteries to continue to look after more difficult to manage children. The respite scheme would be more cost effective than seeking Independent Fostering Agency respite placements. Children could also be offered a more stable and regular respite option which will support them to form positive relationships with their respite carers.

Children and young people have requested that respite care be called *Sleep Overs* as this is more user friendly and more about what the process is.

Respite care may also be used to offer support to a family whose children are on the edge of care. This could be supported to enable parents to attend meetings, parenting courses or to have a positive relationship with their children. This would constitute a very short respite offer; there is a risk that this could be seen as a ‘back door’ into being accommodated and therefore needs to be handled sensitively and carefully. Our foster carers are skilled in family support tasks and can offer this service therefore the boundaries between respite care and this kind of work needs to be carefully managed.

#### **4. Summary of key areas for consideration**

The number and profile of CLA in Rutland has remained fairly stable, with an average of around 34 children and young people in care at any one time and around 50-55 CLA over the course of a year. The number of CLA has increased slightly over recent years in line with population growth and mirroring the national trend. The number of Care Leavers is also stable at around 23 over each of the last three years. Rutland is the smallest local authority in England and faces a different set of challenges to larger authorities in ensuring the best possible provision of services for CLA and those leaving care.

The profile of CLA in Rutland can fluctuate significantly due to the relative low number of children in the cohort at any one time. As such, the impact of a small number of sibling groups moving in or out of care can have a disproportionately large impact on the profile of the cohort. The same is true of the cohort of Care Leavers. There are no meaningful differences between Rutland and the national comparator which can be drawn with regards to age, although there does seem to be a higher proportion of boys in the Rutland CLA cohort (compared to the national profile) which has been evident for a few years. The proportion of CLA in Rutland who are part of a sibling is broadly comparable with the national comparator, with roughly half of all CLA having at least one other sibling in care. The ethnic profile of CLA in Rutland shows a slightly higher representation of children from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups (BAME) when compared to the general population of children in Rutland. Whilst the numbers are small, all of the Foster Carers in Rutland, apart from one, are White British.

In line with the national picture, the majority of placements for CLA in Rutland are with Foster Carers and this has remained fairly static over the last five years. With around half of CLA placed more than 20 miles outside of the local authority boundary, Rutland has the highest rate in England. However, factors other than distance should also be taken into considered for any placement. Of the children that have been looked after for two-and-a-half years or more, 79% have been in the same placement for two years. Rutland has a particularly high rate of placement stability in Connected Person placements.

In Rutland, the total spend on CLA increased by 56% over the last 5 years since 2011; the spend on CLA in Rutland as a proportion of all spending on Children's Services over the same period has gone up from 26.7% to 34.6%, so CLA now accounts for around a third of all spending on Children's Services in Rutland. However, it remains considerably lower than the comparative figure for the region (43.1%) or nationally (44.1%). The average cost per child looked after is also much lower in Rutland than the average for local authorities in England - outcomes for CLA in Rutland are being achieved at a much lower cost than in other local authorities.

Rutland currently has 16 fostering households who could provide up to 28 placements and 17 Special Guardianship households caring for 21 children are also currently supported. All 9 young people Rutland has placed with an Independent Fostering Agency are through the East Midlands Regional Children's Framework. Although the numbers of CLA are low, there is a range of provision available via the Council and health partners to offer wrap-around support.

The experience of Care Leavers in Rutland is judged 'good' by Ofsted. It is recognised that local authority staff make strenuous efforts to maintain frequent contact with all of their Care Leavers, and have remained in touch with all of them for the past two years. All current Care Leavers are safe, not at risk of harm and reside in suitable accommodation, either with former foster carers or independently.

Rutland's Adoption Service is provided Leicestershire County Council under a Service Level Agreement (SLA). Eight Rutland children have been matched with adopters by Leicestershire over the duration of the SLA. Two Rutland children have been adopted this year, one child is in their adoptive placement and there a further child has had adoptive parents identified.

There are currently 4 children currently placed with IFA placements. One of these children and carers are undergoing the Adoption Process. One young man is almost 16 years and looking to move back to the Rutland area to live with another in house foster carer then remain at age 18 years on a staying put arrangement. These changes will in affect mean that Rutland have 2 long term children placed in an IFA placement. With 10 children IFA placements in 2017, this demonstrates there are now more children in an in-house or connected carer placement.

One foster carer is currently undergoing an application for a Special Guardianship Order for a young man

There are opportunities to make a difference for new children coming into the service; in particular the Council is focusing on:

- Increasing the number and diversity of Foster Carers;
- Developing the Staying Put Scheme; and
- Exploring options for Supported Accommodation with Rutland.

The Council is committed to improving the Fostering Service and increasing the numbers of Foster Carers approved by the Local Authority. The overall aim is to have sufficient, diverse foster families within the County to supply the demand for Rutland Looked after Children. We aim to recruit carers that are able to offer a range of placement including sibling placement, parent and baby placements, supportive living placements for our young people moving into independence and concurrent placement for our children who are being adopted. This would give our children coming into care in the future the opportunity to be kept within their local community, wherever this is safe to do so, and to maintain their identity, education and friendship groups.